

Appendix C. BLM PLANNING DECISIONS FROM THE BLM COACHELLA VALLEY CALIFORNIA DESERT CONSERVATION AREA PLAN AMMENDMENT

<i>Summary of CDCA Plan Amendment Decisions applicable to Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument</i>
<p><u>BLM - Land Health Standards</u></p> <p>Adopt regional land health standards, addressing soils, native species, riparian/wetland/ stream function, and water quality. These regional land health standards would apply to all BLM lands and programs, and would be implemented through terms and conditions of permits, leases and other authorizations, actions, resource monitoring, assessments undertaken in accordance with BLM's land use plans.</p>
<p><u>BLM - Air Quality</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Reduce the number of unpaved routes upwind of sensitive receptors. 2) Manage unauthorized off-road use and provide opportunities for OHV use away from sensitive receptors; 3) Install sand fencing to reduce PM10 emissions and maintain habitat for sand dependent species; 4) Authorized uses would be in conformance with the Coachella Valley PM10 State Implementation Plan
<p><u>BLM - Habitat Conservation Objectives</u></p> <p>For each of the eight vegetation community types (Figure 2-4), the habitat conservation objectives outlined in Table 2-4 would be used to assess compatible uses and to develop appropriate mitigation measures within conservation areas on BLM-managed lands. Future activities would be required to conform to the habitat conservation objectives established for a particular community type within the conservation areas.</p>
<p><u>BLM - Fire Management -</u></p> <p>Fire Management Category A. The following communities are areas where fire would not be desired at all: sand dunes and sand fields. Immediate suppression is a critical element of fire management in these desert environments because fire historically has never played a large role in the development and maintenance of the ecosystem.</p> <p>Fire Management Category B. The following vegetation communities are areas where wildfire is not desired: (1) desert scrub, (2) desert alkali scrub, (3) marsh, (4) dry wash woodland, pinyon-juniper woodland and mesquite, and (5) riparian areas. Immediate suppression is a critical element of fire management in these desert communities because fire historically has never played a large role in the development and maintenance of these communities. Prescribed fire may be utilized as a resource management tool in very select situations, for example to effectively manage exotic vegetation.</p> <p>Fire Management Category C. (1) Oak woodlands and forest communities and (2) chaparral communities are areas where wildland fire (including prescribed burning) may be allowed. The following constraints must be considered in determining the appropriate level of suppression: (1) emphasize protection of life and property, especially trail users and montane communities, (2) evaluate potential beneficial or adverse effects on threatened and endangered species habitat, especially endemic species, (3) evaluate potential for adverse effects to significant or sensitive cultural and other natural resources, (4) promote mosaic pattern of vegetation resulting from different fire histories within the larger landscape, (5) protect areas so that they do not burn at less than 15 year intervals.</p>

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<p><u>BLM - Land Tenure: Exchange & Sale Criteria</u></p> <p>BLM lands in the Coachella Valley would generally be retained in public ownership. The following criteria would be applied in evaluating the suitability of land exchanges and sales. Land exchanges and sales may be considered if they would: 1) Facilitate effective and efficient management of conservation areas; 2) Be conducted in coordination with the local jurisdictions; 3) Would result in a net benefit to the conservation areas or divert intensive uses away from sensitive areas; 4) Not remove rare species nor their habitat, nor remove rare habitat types from conservation management; 5) Not remove eligible historic properties from conservation management; and 6) Not divest of public domain lands which eliminates a significant public benefit.</p>
<p><u>BLM - Land Tenure: Acquisition Criteria</u></p> <p>Acquisition proposals which meet the following criteria may be considered: 1) Be acquired from willing sellers only; 2) Be coordinated with the local jurisdictions; 3) Benefit the Coachella Valley conservation areas by augmenting public ownership in a sensitive area or diverting intensive uses away from sensitive areas; or 4) Improve the presence of a variety of biotic or abiotic habitat components under conservation management.</p>
<p><u>BLM - Management of Acquired and Formerly Withdrawn Lands</u></p> <p>Lands acquired by purchase, donation or lands removed from withdrawal status shall be managed in accordance with the CDCA Plan, as amended and the applicable land and mineral laws upon issuance of an opening order published in the <i>Federal Register</i>. Lands located within the boundaries of ACECs or any other area having an administrative designation established through the land use planning process shall become part of the area within which they are located and managed accordingly upon issuance of the opening order. Off-highway vehicle area and route designations would be applied to acquired lands based on a suite of proposed criteria to ensure consistency with surrounding land uses. Acquired and formerly withdrawn lands are subject to applicable land and minerals laws when an opening order is issued and published in the <i>Federal Register</i></p>
<p><u>BLM - Communication Sites & Utilities</u></p> <p>Windpark development would be permitted in designated areas and new towers within existing communication sites on a space available basis and consistent with habitat conservation objectives using appropriate mitigation measures. Proposed utilities within designated utility corridors and within conservation areas may be considered, consistent with the habitat conservation objectives.</p>
<p><u>BLM - Sand and Gravel Mining</u></p> <p>No mining decisions apply as due to federal lands within the Monument being withdrawn from mining, (Public Law 106-351)</p>
<p><u>USFS - Livestock Grazing</u></p> <p>Current management of the Wellman Canyon grazing allotment as provided in the CDCA Plan, as amended.</p>
<p><u>BLM - Wild Horse and Burro Program</u></p> <p>Retire Palm Canyon & Morongo HMAs. BLM parcels within and adjacent to the Palm Canyon HMA (T5S R4E and T4S R4E) are to be transferred to the Agua Caliente Tribe via land exchange, in accordance with the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument Act of 2000</p>

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BLM - Motorized-Vehicle Area Designations

Establish an off-highway vehicle managed use area in the vicinity of Drop 31. Windy Point south of Highway 111 would be designated "closed" to off-highway vehicles. Conservation areas and the remaining BLM-managed lands, except wilderness would be designated or remain "limited." Wilderness areas are closed to casual motorized-vehicle use by statute. BLM would initiate a public information effort to assist OHV users in identifying and locating the appropriate areas for various types of OHV recreation. Work with Riverside County and the OHV Recreation Division of the California Department of Parks and Recreation to establish an OHV recreation area in the southeastern portion of the Coachella Valley. If the OHV play area lands were to be acquired by BLM, the intent would be to designate the area as "open".

BLM - Motorized-Vehicle Access:

Route Designations

47 miles of routes would be designated open. 26 miles of routes would be designated closed. 70 miles of existing route closures, established through previous planning efforts or rights-of-ways shall remain in effect. Dunn road would be closed to casual use until bighorn sheep recover.

BLM - Recreation: Stopping, Parking, and Vehicle Camping

Stopping, parking, and vehicle camping would be allowed within 100 feet from the centerline of an approved route except where fenced.

This exception applies to all alternatives: *Where wilderness boundaries are coincident with approved routes, stopping, parking, and vehicle camping must remain outside of wilderness boundary.*

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BLM - Peninsular Ranges Bighorn Sheep Recovery Strategy

- Acquire, or exchange to acquire, bighorn sheep habitat from willing landowners
- Implement a fire management plan in fire adapted habitats to help maintain bighorn sheep habitat
- Management of invasive weeds such as tamarisk, arundo, and fountain grass will continue to be a priority habitat management effort
- Manage aircraft activities to reduce or eliminate habitat fragmentation or interference with bighorn sheep resource use patterns
- Manage road use on BLM-managed lands, consistent with the CDCA Plan (1980) as amended, to minimize habitat fragmentation or interference with bighorn sheep resource use patterns
- Develop and implement education and public awareness programs
- Publish an annual report describing management, monitoring results, and management implications of research conducted on BLM-managed public lands.
- Coordinate all management and monitoring efforts with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department of Fish and Game, Coachella Valley Association of Governments, and local jurisdictions to ensure a landscape level approach to recovery of bighorn sheep populations.
- Make public lands available for species management by California Department of Fish and Game for activities, such as predator management, reintroduction and augmentation, conducted in coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and local jurisdictions, and in accordance with the Master Memorandum of Understanding between the California Department of Fish and Game and the Bureau of Land Management (October 1993).
- Maintain existing water sources through tamarisk eradication and provide additional artificial water sources on public lands. Locations for artificial water sources would be carefully selected to reduce interactions between bighorn and the urban interface
- Reduce impacts to bighorn sheep (especially during the water stress and lambing season) using a combination of methods, including voluntary avoidance programs, closures, seasonal restrictions, and permit stipulations and mitigations. Projects emphasizing the least disturbing techniques available and practicable would be encouraged. Some level of disturbance to bighorn sheep may be permitted during water stress and lambing season to obtain information, resulting in more effective management of bighorn sheep and their habitat
- Construct fences across public lands to exclude bighorn sheep from urban areas where there is a demonstrated problem. Projects would be coordinated with local jurisdictions, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the California Department of Fish and Game to ensure that water is available before sheep are excluded from urban areas known to provide water

BLM - Hiking, Biking & Equestrian Trails

Manage trail segments across public lands in coordination with members of the public, local jurisdictions, State and other Federal agencies to provide for a year-round suite of non-motorized recreation opportunities on interconnected trails in the Coachella Valley and surrounding mountains. Non-motorized uses of the public lands within the Coachella Valley planning area may be limited, including area and trail closures, as needed to protect sensitive resources. New trails which avoid impacts to sensitive resources and are developed in coordination with the community may be allowed.